

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO**

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RUTH CALDERÓN-CARDONA, et al.,

Civil Action No.: 08-1367

Plaintiffs,

vs.

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA,
a.k.a. NORTH KOREA, et al.,

Defendants.

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DECLARATION OF CLAUDE CHANAN ZEITOUN

I, Claude Chanan Zeitoun, declare pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 as follows:

1. I am an Israeli citizen, born in 1939, married, and the father of three children.
2. In 1966, after working six years as an active duty policeman in the Israeli police force, I began working for the French airline company, Air France. My place of employment was the Ben Gurion International Airport (hereinafter "Ben Gurion"), and I was responsible for weights and balancing in the airline's loading department. At this time the airport was known as the "Lod International Airport".
3. About three years later, I began working for the Israeli Airline company, El Al, as a ground steward. Here, as well, I began working at Ben Gurion. I worked for El Al for thirty-three years, until my retirement on October 1, 2001.

4. In 1972, I was employed at El Al as a traffic officer in the Traffic Department at Ben Gurion.

5. As part of my duties, I was responsible for loading and unloading the aircrafts according to their flight plans and for load-balancing the aircraft.

6. On May 30, 1972, I was working the afternoon shift, which was set between 4:00 PM and 12:00 AM. Working with me on the same shift was a group of about ten baggage handlers and mechanics who were responsible for loading, unloading, and servicing the aircraft.

7. At 10:20 PM, I was busy supervising the unloading of a Finnair flight which belonged to the SAS airline company, when suddenly, I heard loud explosions, gunfire, and screams coming from the passenger hall of the airport. The passenger hall was a distance of 250 meters from us, and the sounds of screaming and explosions were particularly loud and intense.

8. After a few seconds, I saw a man armed with a rifle leave the passenger hall and run towards an El Al aircraft that had just arrived from Frankfurt. I would later learn that the individual's name was Kozo Okamoto, a Japanese man who a few moments earlier, along with his two accomplices, had carried out a massacre in the passenger hall. As he was running, I saw Okamoto fire his rifle at the air crew which had just descended the stairs from the aircraft.

9. Okamoto continued running and next aimed his weapon at the aircraft that I and my team were working on. He then began running towards us, throwing grenades at the aircraft's engines.

10. We threw ourselves on the ground behind the aircraft. I was afraid for my life. I was terrified and felt completely powerless. In the past, I had been a policeman, and it had been my duty to arrest people such as this man who was now shooting at us. Yet not one of us had a weapon to return fire or anything else we could use to defend ourselves.

11. Okamoto continued to approach us and threw two more grenades towards the aircraft engines, which resulted in a loud explosion inside the aircraft. The damaged portion of the aircraft was right next to us, mere meters away. The last grenades he threw appeared to be the end of his ammunition and Okamoto turned and ran away from the airport, towards the fields of a neighboring community, situated next to the airport.

12. When he began to flee, I realized that he was out of ammunition and I got up and chased after him. I managed to catch up with him and saw that he still had his rifle slung over his shoulder. However, in spite of the fact that he was still armed, I did not think of the danger and only felt an uncontrollable urge to capture him.

13. I caught him from behind, with my right arm clasped around his throat in a chokehold, and threw him to the ground.

14. The force of the fall caused the weapon to fly away, and with my arm around his throat, I pinned the terrorist to the ground.

15. At that moment I was able to see his face from up close, and saw for the first time that the man I had caught was Japanese. He was short of stature, dressed in a brown business suit and tie, and was terrified and sweating profusely.

16. At first, given his dress and appearance, I thought perhaps Okamoto was a passenger. Without releasing my grip, I asked him in English: "Are you a passenger?" Okamoto did not answer, but only looked at me in terror.

17. At the same moment I heard a border policeman who had walked out of the passenger hall shout to me to keep holding Okamoto, because he was a terrorist. I kept him pinned to the ground. Okamoto didn't resist, and just looked scared to death.

18. After what seemed like an eternity, the same border policeman returned and helped me to restrain Okamoto.

19. Soon afterwards, a jeep of the border police appeared on the scene. With the help of the other officers we loaded the terrorist onto the jeep and took him to the border police station at the entrance to the airport.

20. Security officials arrived at the border police station and attempted to interrogate Okamoto. They stripped him to make sure he had no other weapons on his person. Then they asked him in English who he was, where he was from, how many accomplices he had, and so forth, but Okamoto did not respond to any of their questions.

21. After several hours, Okamoto was taken back to the passenger hall. I stayed at the border police station to answer the investigators' questions.

22. I learned later on that the investigators, when they understood that Okamoto didn't speak English, looked for a Japanese translator. Only after several hours did they managed to find one, who was a lecturer at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

23. I also learned that, in the course of the interrogation, Okamoto cooperated with the investigators, and told them that there had been three terrorists, and that his two accomplices had been killed during the attack.

24. In the passenger hall Okamoto identified his two compatriots, one of whom was killed by a ricocheting bullet and the other by a grenade that blew up in his hand.

25. After his interrogation in the passenger hall, Okamoto was brought back to the border police station and that was the last time I saw him that day.

26. After several weeks, criminal proceedings were brought against Okamoto for his role in the massacre and I was summoned to give testimony. At the trial, I identified Okamoto as the man I had captured the night of the attack, and learned that he was a terrorist who had been brought up and trained by the Japanese Red Army. I also learned that the attack was a joint

operation perpetrated by the Japanese Red Army and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

27. At the conclusion of his trial, Okamoto was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

28. It is worth noting that, at the time, the Israeli authorities in general and the Israeli Airport Authority in particular were not prepared for a terrorist attack of the type or magnitude of the one that had occurred at Lod International Airport.


29. Other than customs officials, some of whom carried pistols in their role as law enforcement officers, there were no security personnel inside the airport, and no one there was armed.

30. The only security personnel at the airport during this period were from the border police, who would patrol outside the airport, and guarded the airport from outside.

31. Under these circumstances, there was no way to prevent or respond to the attack that was carried out at Lod International Airport that night, and this fact was exploited to the fullest by these terrible murderers.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on November 19, 2009.



Claude Chanan Zeitoun